

IOWA ARTIST **Harley Refsal**

TITLE **Flat Plane Carving**

GRADE LEVEL **Elementary**

These lesson plans are designed for art educators to adapt to the needs of their individual classes.

INFLUENCE

The traditions and culture of Norway

MATERIALS

Modeling clay

1 carving tool per student made with:

- Paperclips
- Clothespin
- Masking tape or duct tape

To create a tool for sculpting: Straighten a thick wire paperclip; bend to desired shape for sculpting. Place the ends of the paperclip wire within a wooden clothespin. Wrap with masking tape or duct tape to hold the clip shut. Make sure the tape is TIGHT.



Iowa Artist Harley Refsal
Wooden carvings

LESSON PLAN: ELEMENTARY

Harley Refsal

OVERVIEW

The traditions and culture of Norway influence flat plane carver Harley Refsal's life and artwork. As a young boy his art journey began with creating toys and experimenting with wood carving. Mr. Refsal has been instrumental in reviving the skill and the technique of flat plane carving. In this lesson students will explore carving techniques, folk artistry and the influences of their own ancestry.

Preview Harley Refsal's **Biography**, **Video Synopsis**, **Video** and **Images** of his work on the Iowa Arts Council web site www.iowaartscouncil.org/ and select resources appropriate for your adaptation of this lesson. Have students locate the artist's place of residence on an Iowa map.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What inspires and influences Iowa artist Harley Refsal?
- How does Iowa artist Harley Refsal inspire you?
- What else inspires and influences you and your artwork?

INTRODUCTION

The teacher will begin by sharing his/her own ancestry and how it has influenced his or her life. Ask students to identify their ancestry and share the cultural and/or ancestral influences on family, traditions and celebrations. Show the video of Mr. Refsal carving. While watching the video, instruct students to watch and listen for information on Mr. Refsal's technique and what inspired and influenced him. Follow with a discussion on this art form, the skills used and reflections on inspiration, influence and ancestry. Have the students locate where Mr. Refsal lives on an Iowa map and the Scandinavian countries on a world map to show where his ancestors lived.

Explain to the students that by definition, flat plane carving is a figure carved in large flat planes by a carving knife. Marks from the tool are left with little or no sanding or rounding.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- design and carve a three-dimensional shape
- identify and use techniques for carving
- identify safety rules and use when carving
- carve leaving rough marks
- relate influences of Scandinavian folk artistry on Harley Refsal to their own ancestry
- explain how they are inspired by Iowan folk artist Harley Refsal

PROCEDURES

1. Invite the students to brainstorm figures that may make good carving pieces (faces, animals, etc.). Identify what a basic carving may need to include; rough carving marks defined by a stylized shape. Introduce the carving tool students will use, and discuss why, in the classroom environment, they are not using knives. The teacher may wish to show them traditional carving tools and safety wear used for this art form.
2. Request students sketch a plan for the figure they want to carve.

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IOWA'S
CULTURAL
+
ARTISTIC
LEGACY
EVOLVES

Influence + Inspiration

LESSON PLAN: ELEMENTARY
Harley Refsal



3. Provide each student with modeling clay and invite them to experiment with the “hand made” carving tool to create sharp lines, curves and shapes. Students will then carve the clay following their sketch.
4. In conclusion reflect with the students
 - success/challenges
 - would carving be easier with a carving knife
 - any art influence from their ancestry that they would like to share

RESOURCES

Internet

www.cca-carvers.org/refsal.html

Showcase of work and links to Caricature Carvers of America

www.woodcarvingillustrated.com/gallery/showgallery.php/cat/57

Caricature woodcarving from various artists

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harley_Refsal

Definition and links to carving experts

www.iowaartscouncil.org/programs/folk-and-traditional-arts/iowa-roots/season-two/harley-refsal.shtml

Harley's Iowa Roots interview

Images

www.pinewoodforge.com/blanks.html

Images of pine forge cutouts by Harley Refsal

Literature

Scandinavian-Style Figure Carving Patterns by Harley Refsal

Carving for Kids: An Introduction to Woodcarving by Robin Edward Trudel

Leroy's Zoo: Featuring the Folk Art Carvings of Leroy Ramon Archuleta
by Warren Lowe, Sylvia Lowe, Debbie Ritchey and Leroy Ramon Archuleta

National Standards | Iowa Standards

1. Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
2. Using knowledge of structures and functions
3. Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas
4. Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures
5. Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others
6. Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

IOWA ARTIST **Harley Refsal**

TITLE **Flat Plane Carving**

GRADE LEVEL

Middle | High School

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INFLUENCE

The traditions and culture of Norway

MATERIALS

Materials

Sandstone or pinewood

Carving tools

- Plastic knives or carving materials if available

Safety goggles and gloves



Iowa artist Harley Refsal
Wooden carvings

LESSON PLAN: MIDDLE | HIGH SCHOOL

Harley Refsal

OVERVIEW

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INTRODUCTION

The teacher will begin with sharing his/her own ancestry and how it has influenced his or her life. Ask students to identify their ancestry and share the cultural and/or ancestral influences on family, traditions and celebrations. Show the video of Mr. Refsal carving. While watching the video, instruct students to watch and listen for information on Mr. Refsal's technique and what inspired and influenced this Iowa folk artist. Follow with a discussion on this art form, the skills used and reflections on inspiration, influence and ancestry. Have the students locate where Mr. Refsal lives on an Iowa map and the Scandinavian countries on a world map where his ancestors lived.

Explain to the students that by definition, flat plane carving is a figure carved in large flat planes by a carving knife. Marks from the tool are left with little or no sanding or rounding.

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- design and carve a three-dimensional shape
- identify and use techniques for carving
- identify safety rules and use when carving
- carve leaving rough marks
- relate influences of Scandinavian folk artistry on Harley Refsal to their own ancestry
- identify how they are inspired by Iowa folk artist Harley Refsal

PROCEDURES

1. Identify what a basic carving may need to include; rough carving marks defined by a stylized shape. Introduce the carving tool students will use and safety guidelines for using the tools. The teacher may wish to show traditional carving tools and safety wear used for this art form, including the Kevlar® glove shown in the video.
2. Invite the students to brainstorm figures that may make good carving pieces (faces, animals, etc.) and ask them to research a variety of cultures who use carving as an art form. Students will research the cultures, their use of carving and specific techniques.

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LESSON PLAN: MIDDLE | HIGH SCHOOL
Harley Refsal



3. The teacher will have students share their research and choose a carving technique to use in creating a piece of art traditional to the culture chosen.
4. Materials will be dependent on the research done or can be limited to paper, modeling clay, pine wood and sandstone.
5. In conclusion reflect with the students regarding:
 - their successes/challenges
 - the techniques used in different cultures
 - the variety of carving tools used by different cultures
 - the amount of time needed for this work and how this compares to other art forms

RESOURCES

Internet

www.youtube.com/user/whittler0507

Youtube video demonstrating carving techniques

Note: Preview before showing students.

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